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God Bless Our Soldiers.

God bless our crippled soldiers! in whose scarred forms to-day
We read the price which freedom dared to pay,
Whose empty sleeves, and crutches, remind us of the debt
Which never can be cancelled, which we never can forget.

Oh, boys who faced death for us! oh, boys who saved our land!
Quenching, with your own life-blood, fierce treason's flaming
brand,
The thought of all your suffering, the pain, and loss, you know,
And the life-long cross you carry, makes every heart overflow.

We cannot bear it for you, that heavy, heavy cross,
No human love or friendship can make up to you the loss
Of priceless limbs that never shall do your bidding more,
Nor can we health and vigor to your shattered frames restore.

Yet, all our hearts are with you; in many a fervent prayer
We ask the great All-Father to make your lives His care;
We ask that on you ever, His blessing may descend,
And His love, which can help you, be with you to the end.

Bless them, oh, Heavenly Father! we ask in Jesus' name,
Hear us, oh dear Redeemer! Thy heart is still the same
As when, our flesh assuming, stooping our life so share,
Thou didst know all the sorrow, and the pain that mortals bear.

Thou knowest still, Thou carest, Thou hearest, when we pray,
Not one of all our soldiers from Thee is far away;
Be Thou their strength and succor, till earthly needs are past,
And give to each a welcome to thine own home at last.

BESSIE LAKE.

The Soldier's Son; Or the Triumph of Virtue.

"Cast thy bread upon the waters, and thou shalt find it after
many days."

"Shall I take your baggage, sir?" said an intelligent-
looking boy to a traveler, who had just arrived at one of
the principal hotels at Louisville.

"My servant takes charge of it," replied the gentle-
man.

But struck with the peculiar expression of his counte-
nance, as the boy retired, he flung him a piece of money.
The boy looked at it with hesitation, and his pale cheek
reddened to crimson. Picking it up at length, he ap-
proached the traveler with an air of embarrassment.

"Excuse me, sir, I sought employment, not alms."

"True, my little son," said the gentleman laughing;
"but you surely will not return so small a trifle on my
hands."

The boy stood for a moment in silence; his young spirit
evidently recoiled from the idea of appropriating the hu-
miliating gift. He remained twirling it in his fingers.
There was an expression of mingled haughtiness and gra-
titude in his manly features, and his slender form assumed
all the irregular attitudes of indecision. At this moment
a beggar approached, and his countenance brightened.

"Permit me," said he, bowing gracefully to the trav-
eler,—"permit me to transfer your bounty." And, pre-
sented the coin to the humble mendicant, he instantly dis-
appeared.

The little incident made a strong impression on the
mind of the stranger. Two days afterwards, he distin-
guished the classic figure of the boy amongst a group of
laborers. Pleased at again seeing him, he immediately
approached him.

"May I ask your name, my young acquaintance?" he
inquired in a tone of kindness.

"Wilder Lee," replied the boy; and he still continued
to ply the instrument of labor with increased diligence.

Our traveler, whose name was Wilton, looked at him
with increased interest. The extreme beauty of his coun-
tenance, its marked expression of high and noble feeling,
strongly contrasted with the coarseness of his dress and
the rudeness of his companions.

"Have you no parents?" inquired Mr. Wilton.

"I have yet a father."

"And what is his vocation?"

"He is a worn-out soldier, sir, of the Revolution."

And the boy applied himself to his task with an inten-
sity that seemed intended to prevent any further interro-
gation. The tenacious stranger, however, was not to be
shaken off.

"Do you live with your father?"

"Certainly, sir."

"And where?"

The boy pointed in silence to a decayed and miserable
looking dwelling. Mr. Wilton sighed. A keen Novem-
ber blast, which at the moment whistled around him, told
him the inadequacy of such a shelter.

"A soldier," he mentally exclaimed; "and perhaps his
blood has been shed to secure the rights of those who
now revel in luxury."

A few hours afterwards, he knocked at the door of the
shattered habitation. If an interest in the father had
already been awakened by the son, it was at once con-
firmed by the appearance of the old man before him. He
had raised his head slowly from his staff, on which he was
leaning, at the entrance of the stranger, and discovered a
countenance on which the lines of sorrow and suffering
were distinctly traced. Still, there was something in his
high though furrowed brow, that told his affinity with the
proud Wilder; and the ravages of infirmity had not alto-
gether robbed his wasted form of the dignity of the
soldier.

"Will you pardon the intrusion of a stranger?" said
Mr. Wilton. "I have been led hither merely to chat an
hour with a Revolutionary veteran."

"He who comes to cheer the solitude of darkness must
be welcome," said the old man.

And Mr. Wilton now perceived that he was entirely
blind. The events of the Revolution afforded an easy
topic to conversation, and they chatted without effort.

"I would," said Mr. Wilton, "that every one who as-
sisted in our glorious struggle might individually share the
prosperity it has confirmed to our nation. I fear, however,
that there are many whose blood cemented the proud fab-
ric of our independence that are themselves left in want
and obscurity."

"True," said the old man; "the decayed soldier, whose
strength was wasted in the conflict, has but little for him-
self at home. But I trust his posterity will reap the har-
vest he has sown."

"You have a son," said Mr. Wilton, "worthy of such
a harvest. Is the youth called Wilder your all?"

"All that survives of a large family. He alone, the
child of my old age, has been spared to save me from de-
pendence."

"Have you been long deprived of your sight?" asked
Mr. Wilton.

"Only two years."

"And during that period, have you had no resource but
the labor of your son?"

"None. But the wants of a soldier are few, and the
filial piety of my boy renders him cheerful under every
privation that affects only himself. He labors incessantly,
and I have no regrets but that of seeing him thus fettered
to servitude."

"I would," said Mr. Wilton, with enthusiasm—"I
would I could place him in a sphere more suited to his
worth! With the advantages of education, he would be-
come an ornament to society. But this, under your pecu-
liar circumstances, he cannot have even in an ordinary
degree."

"But for his taste for learning," said the old soldier,
"he must have been utterly destitute. There were hours,
however, when he could not labor, and, as these were al-
ways devoted to study, he has gradually acquired its com-
mon principles."

The entrance of Wilder himself interrupted the conver-
sation. He had brought some little delicacies for his
father, the avails of his day's labor.

"I have just been thinking," said Mr. Wilton, "of mak-
ing some arrangements, with the approbation of your
father, for your future establishment. I grieve to see a
boy of promise thus losing the spring-time of life."

"You forget, sir," said Wilder, respectfully bowing,
"that I can accept no proposal that would separate me
from my father, however advantageous."

"Certainly not, in his present situation; but I have
friends here who will readily assist me in making a suit-
able provision for his support; and you may then be put to
business that will secure you a future competence."

"Impossible, sir. My father can have no claims like
those on his son. 'Tis but a short time since my weak-
ness required his support; and shall I now transfer the
duties of filial gratitude to the hand of charity?"

Mr. Wilton knew not what to reply.

"Do not think me ungrateful for your proffered kind-
ness," continued the boy, while his dark eyes swam in
tears, and every trace of pride suddenly gave place to the
liveliest expression of gratitude. "I feel most deeply
your solicitude for my interest; but, indeed, sir, I am
perfectly happy in my present condition. My father, too,
is satisfied with the slender provision which my labor af-
fords; and, should it hereafter become insufficient, I will
not scruple to ask the aid of benevolence."

Mr. Wilton was affected. The soldier again leaned his
head over his staff, and was probably invoking blessings
on the head of his son. A storm had commenced, and the
sleet was even then dripping through the broken roof.—
Mr. Wilton rose to depart.

"Must I then go," he exclaimed, "without rendering
you any service? Will you not even accept"—and he put
his hand into his pocket.

But Wilder drew back with an expression that answered
the unfinished sentence.

The old man gave him his hand with an air of be-
nignity—

"Accept my thanks, sir; and suffer me to inquire the
name of him who has thus sought the dwelling of
poverty?"

"The stranger gave him his name and address, and, re-
ceiving a promise that they would seek him in future need,
reluctantly left them."

Mr. Wilton was a man of feeling, but he was also a
man of pleasure; and, with the votaries of dissipation,
the soft and holy whisperings of benevolence are too often
lost in more seductive strains. The scene he had now
witnessed had, however, awakened all his better prin-
ciples. The dignified submission of the father, the proud
humility of the son, preferring the most servile labor to
the shadow of dependence, his deep, but quiet tenderness
for his unfortunate parent, and his perfect exemption from
selfish feeling, all were vividly impressed on the visitor.
If intercourse with the good influences even cold and tor-
pid hearts, that influence must be strong, indeed, on the
soul of feeling.

For a little time, the pageantry of the world lost its
power on the gay Wilton, and all the haunts of pleasure
were forgotten. He shuddered as he contrasted the ele-
gancies that surrounded him with the destitution he had
witnessed. The straw pallet of age and infirmity, the
picture that memory drew, seemed even yet more vivid
than the reality. The following day, Mr. Wilton had left
the city; but a blank cover, inclosing two hundred dol-
lars, had been placed, by an unknown hand, in that of the
old soldier.

Years passed away, and the glow of unearthly pleasure
that the traveler then experienced was gradually forgot-
ten. The blandishments of pleasure resumed their wonted

influence, her glittering wave hurried him onward without
the power of reflection; and, if a momentary wish would
have led him to inquire the further fate of Wilder Lee,
the bright phantasms that surrounded him diverted his
purpose.

Death had deprived him of an amiable wife, whose in-
fluence might have won him from the sphere of illusion;
and his only child, early accustomed to the rounds of
fashionable pursuits, thought not of opposing them.

The exalted sentiments, however, which, even in child-
hood, she had imbibed from her mother, preserved her
from that contaminating influence; and, amid the blight
of a gay world, the purity of her character remained stain-
less as the snows of the unapproachable cliff.

Gentle as the reed of summer, she yielded to the im-
pulses of those with whom her lot was cast; but her mind,
supported by high and frequent communion with the mem-
ory of her sainted mother, escaped the thralldom which
habit might otherwise have secured.

At the age of fifteen, she accompanied an invalid friend
to the medical springs of Harrodsburg. This village, at
that time, was a place of fashionable resort, and, to a mind
like that of Isabel Wilton, afforded themes of limitless re-
flection.

The buoyancy of health was here contrasted with the
languor of disease; the hectic of death with the laugh of
revelry; palpable images of mortality mingled with the vo-
taries of pleasure; the listless who strove to annihilate time,
and the dying who sought to add yet a few more days to
those they had now to number.

Soon after the arrival of Isabel, she was one day struck
on entering the common sitting-room, by an old man, who
sat alone, and apparently unnoticed. His sightless eyes,
his palsied limbs, and the white locks that were thinly
scattered over his pallid features, all at once riveted her
attention. Her heart throbbed with pity, but reverence
mingled with compassion, as she marked the settled and
placid expression of his countenance.

At no great distance a group of ladies were indulging in
bursts of merriment, which, at this moment, struck dis-
cordantly on her heart. She felt that the presence of un-
fortunate age should at least inspire respect, and, involun-
tarily approaching the unheeded old man, she was half re-
solved to address him. Her natural timidity, however,
withheld her, until she was at length called by one of the
gay group to partake of some strawberries.

The irresolute expression of her countenance at once
changed to that of pleasure.

"I will beg some," she said, unhesitatingly, presenting
her work-basket, "for this old gentleman." And she then
approached him without embarrassment. "Will you ac-
cept some strawberries, sir?"

The voice of Isabel was like the low, sighing tones of
an instrument; it touched every chord of the soul.

The old man received them with a smile that spoke a
benediction, while an elegant, though youthful stranger,
who stood reading a newspaper with his back towards
them, suddenly turned round and fixed his eyes on the
blushing girl with mingled admiration and surprise.

She instinctively retreated, and joined the group she had
hitherto shunned, mingling in their trifling.

Soon after, the youth himself approached with her bas-
ket. Presenting it with a look of indescribable import, he
said:

"Accept, miss, the thanks and blessings of age for your
delicate attention."

He then disappeared. In a short time he returned, and
addressed the old man in a tone of respect and tender-
ness:

"I have at length found more quiet lodgings, sir, and
will attend you whenever you feel able to walk."

The old man rose, and, leaning on the arm of the youth,
they left the apartment.

"They are to be temporary sojourners in the village,"
thought Isabel, and a sensation of pleasure, of which she
was perhaps unconscious, arose from the idea of again
meeting them.

They met the next morning at the spring, and again and
again met.

Who shall describe the mingling of kindred spirits?
Who shall trace the intricate and delicate sources of that
mysterious passion which sweeps like a torrent over the
human soul? Scarcely a word had passed between the
youthful strangers; they knew nothing of each other be-
yond the limits of a few short days; yet the years that
preceded had become to them as a tedious dream, their
present was their all of existence, and resembled the reno-
vated life of the chrysalis, when it "sails on new wings
through summer air."

As yet, however, unconscious of the dangerous source
of this new sense of enjoyment, they met without embar-
rassment. The blush that dyed the cheek of Isabel in the
presence of the stranger was that of abstract pleasure;
and the light which flashed upon his eye at her approach
was brilliant as the rays of heaven.—The failing health
of the old blind man, whom he daily attended to the
spring, afforded their only clue even to a passing remark.
The deep interest which his appearance excited in the
bosom of Isabel conquered the scruples of vestal reserve,
and she frequently ventured a timid inquiry respecting
the aged invalid.

There are a thousand nameless attentions too trifling for
description, that come with a cheering influence over the
feeling heart, like the imperceptible breeze that stirs the
delicate leaf. Such were the attentions which misfortune
invariably elicited from the hand of Isabel, no matter
how narrow her sphere of action. Her voice, her step,
were already known to the discriminating ear of the old